

NOV
1971

STRANGE! FANTASTIC! ASTONISHING!



BAFFLING

MYSTERIES

NOV 71



Prisoners in a LOST

NARFSTAR

WE'RE IN FOR A
BLIZZARD, JEFFY! IF
WE DON'T GET TO SOME
SHELTER FAST, WE'LL BE
FROZEN TO DEATH! WHAT
HAPPENED TO OUR
GUIDE?

WE LOST THEM,
BAM, COMING THROUGH
THAT DRIVING FOG! I'M
AFRAID MY SENSE OF
DIRECTION IS ALL SHOT!
I REALLY DON'T KNOW
WHERE WE ARE.



Prisoners in a LOST WORLD



WE'RE IN FOR A BLIZZARD, JEFF! IF WE DON'T GET TO SOME SHELTER FAST, WE'LL BE FROZEN TO DEATH! WHAT HAPPENED TO OUR GUIDES?

WE LOST THEM, DAN, COMING THROUGH THAT GROUND FOG! I'M AFRAID MY SENSE OF DIRECTION IS ALL SHOT! I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHERE WE ARE!

TIBET, ANCIENT MOUNTAIN KINGDOM IN THE HIMALAYAS, TEN THOUSAND FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL-- LAND OF A CULTURE ISOLATED FROM THE WORLD FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS, SILENT, BROODING. . . INTO THE HEART OF THE LAMA COUNTRY JOURNEYED DAN PARKHURST AND JEFF LINGLEY, WORLD FAMOUS RESEARCH TEAM FOR INTERNATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC, TO RECORD THE TRUE PICTURE STORY OF A STRANGE WORLD. BUT AS THEY REACHED THE LAST LEG OF A THOUSAND MILE TREK, THE FIERCE MOUNTAIN ELEMENTS CLOSED IN, LEAVING THEM LOST AND STRANDED.

THE FURY OF THE BLIZZARD MOUNTED . . .

JEFF, WE'RE SAVED! I SEE SOMETHING AHEAD THAT LOOKS LIKE A CAVE! WE'LL BE ABLE TO SIT OUT THIS BLIZZARD!

I CAN'T SEE YOU, DAN! KEEP PULLING ON THAT ROPE TO GUIDE ME! MY KNEES ARE WOBBLY, BUT I'LL MAKE IT!



WHEW, THIS IS THE LAST RUGGED ASSIGNMENT I UNDERTAKE! IF WE EVER GET THESE PICTURES BACK, I'M STAYING IN CIVILIZED PARTS!

RIGHT NOW WE NEED A FIRE! LET'S EXPLORE THE CAVE FOR WOOD OR ANYTHING THAT'LL BURN!



ABOUT ONE HUNDRED FEET FROM THE ENTRANCE, SUDDENLY...



LOOK OUT!

WE'VE BROKEN THROUGH THE EARTH! AHHHH!

DOWN, DOWN INTO THE DEPTHS OF THE EARTH...



HOURS LATER WHEN THE CURTAIN OF UNCONSCIOUSNESS LIFTED...



WHERE ARE WE AND WHO ARE YOU?

AH, AT LAST YOU ARE AWAKE! YOU HAVE SLEPT LONG, UNFORTUNATE ONES! TAMAR HAS STAYED WITH YOU SINCE THEY BROUGHT YOU IN FROM THE CAVERNS OF GOLD!

I CAN REMEMBER THE FALL, BUT THIS STRANGE WORLD AND THIS AIR--IT'S THIN AND DIFFICULT TO BREATHE! TELL ME, TAMAR, WHERE ARE WE?

YOU ARE IN XANDIA! I HAVE LIVED HERE ALL MY LIFE--A VERY LONG TIME!



WHO RULES THIS UNDERGROUND WORLD, AND WHAT WILL BECOME OF US, TAMAR?

YOU ARE PRISONERS OF MY UNCLE, THE KHAN! I DESPISE HIM. HE IS AGRULY, FAT TYRANT WHO GRINDS THE PEOPLE UNDER HIS HEEL! IF I WERE NOT HIS NIECE, I WOULD BE DEAD--A VICTIM OF THE GOLD MINES!



LOOK! THE SOLDIERS OF THE KHAN COME FOR YOU! I MUST WARN YOU THAT THE RULERS OF XANDIA AND THEIR SERVANTS ARE HORRIBLY UGLY BUT THINK THEMSELVES BEAUTIFUL. THEY HATE ALL WHO DO NOT RESEMBLE THEM!

JEFF, LOOK! THEY ARE RIDING UNICORNS!



THE GREAT KHAN, YOUR UNCLE, HAS ORDERED THESE UGLY CREATURES BROUGHT BEFORE HIM. YOU--STOP STRUGGLING! RESISTANCE IS USELESS!

DO AS THEY SAY! YOU ARE POWERLESS!



AT THE COURT OF THE GREAT KHAN...



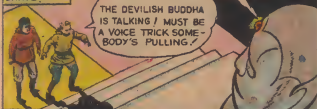
I SAY YOU ARE SPIES, YOU UGLY ONES, SENT FROM ANOTHER WORLD TO SEEK OUT OUR WEAKNESSES TO ATTACK US!

WE ARE FROM ANOTHER WORLD, BUT WE ARE HERE BY ACCIDENT. WE ARE NOT SPIES, YOUR MAJESTY! WE DIDN'T EVEN KNOW THAT XANDIA EXISTED!

THE BUDDHA CONDEMNED THEM IN A VOICE TONELESS AS THE GRAVE!

YOU ARE CONDEMNED TO SLAVERY IN THE GOLD MINES! BUT BEFORE YOU LEAVE, YOU WILL TEST YOUR EVIL STRENGTH AGAINST KANG, THE GIANT SO BE IT! SANGSHOO HAS SPOKEN! TAKE THEM TO THE ARENA!

THE DEVILISH BUDDHA IS TALKING! MUST BE A VOICE TRICK SOMEBODY'S PULLING!



ENOUGH OF YOUR LIES! WE WILL NOW ASK THE GREAT BUDDHA, SANGSHOO, TO SENTENCE YOU! CREATURES WITH FACES AS UGLY AS YOURS MUST BE OUR ENEMY!

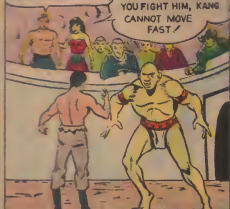


DAN, TAMAR WAS RIGHT! THEY WORSHIP UGLINESS!

JEFF WAS CHOSEN FIRST FOR THE UNEQUAL STRUGGLE...

WE HAD NO CHOICE, TAMAR! HOW CAN WE FIGHT THAT MONSTER?

I CANNOT WATCH THIS CRUEL SPORT! YOUR FRIEND WILL BE KILLED! REMEMBER, DAN, WHEN YOU FIGHT HIM, KANG CANNOT MOVE FAST!



JEFF WAS AN EASY VICTIM FOR THE HULKING GIANT!

NO! NO!

DEATH TO THE ENEMIES OF THE KHAN!



AS THE BRUISED BODY OF JEFF WAS DRAGGED AWAY TO THE MINES...

C'MON, YOU HULKING MOUNTAIN OF UGLINESS! I'LL BET YOU HAVEN'T GOT A BRAIN IN THAT FAT HEAD OF YOURS!

GRRR! YOU WILL NEVER REACH THE GOLD MINES! I WILL SEE TO THAT, PUNY ONE!



THE WILD, UNSGUARDED ATTACK BY THE GIANT WAS JUST WHAT DAN WANTED! HE USED A JUDO BLOW

AIEEE! I CANNOT SEE! HE HAS BLINDED ME!





OH! MY HEAD!
I FAINT...

AND THIS
WILL FINISH
YOU OFF!



A FEW MORE PUNISHING BLOWS
AND THE GIANT LAY PRONE!

WELL, YOUR ROYAL
UGLINESS! DO
I GO TO THE
MINES OR DO
YOU HAVE SOME
MORE PETS FOR
ME TO PLAY
WITH?

CHAIN HIM IN
THE ROYAL GAR-
DEN UNTIL WE
FIND A SUITABLE
BEAST TO SLAY
HIM!



WHEN NIGHT FELL...

TAMAR, YOU'RE
RISKING YOUR
LIFE COMING
HERE!

YOU WERE
MAGNIFICENT, DAN!
BUT I'M AFRAID THE
KHAN WILL PIT YOU
AGAINST A BEAST
WHICH NO MAN CAN
HOPE TO SLAY!



JUST THEN THE SPEAKING PROCESSION PASSED...

WHAT A HEAVEN'S NAME IS THAT?

THOSE ARE THE
SLAVES OF THE KHAN/THE
MINE SLAVES WHO CANNOT
ESCAPE! THESE HAVE ONLY
BEEN AT THE MINES A FEW
MONTHS! NOW YOU KNOW
WHY I HATE MY UNCLE!



WHEN DAN ENTERED THE ARENA FOR THE
SECOND TIME...

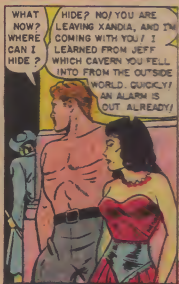
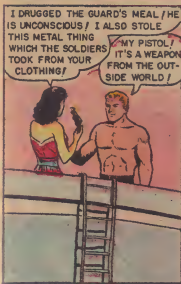
WHATEVER MONSTER THEY'RE DRAGGING OUT,
THEY'RE DEADLY FRIGHTENED OF IT! THIS
LOOKS LIKE THE FINISH OF DAN PARKHURST!

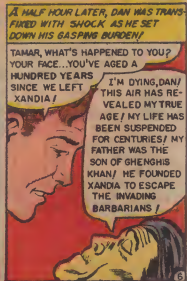
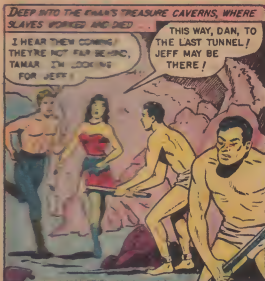
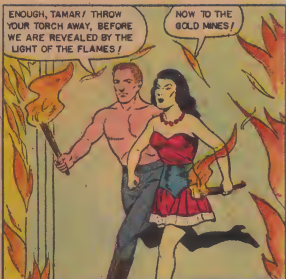


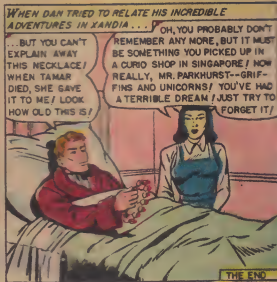
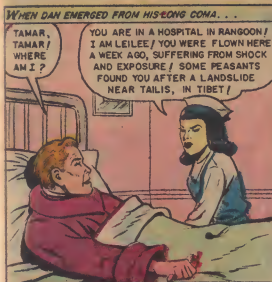
A GRIFFIN! AN ANCIENT MYTHOLOGICAL
BEAST, ALIVE AND HUNGRY!
WITHOUT A WEAPON I'M NO
MATCH FOR THAT THING!



YOU CAN HIDE BEHIND
THAT DOOR! I NEED THIS
MORE THAN YOU!







WHAT'S THE ANSWER TO THESE SCHOOL PROBLEMS?



FOR INFORMATION WRITE TO

National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools

2 WEST 45TH STREET • NEW YORK 36, N.Y.

BAFFLING MYSTERIES

WHEN THE FRENCH ARMY WAS FIGHTING ITS TOUGHEST BATTLE OF WORLD WAR I, TALES OF HEROIC VENTURES BECAME ALMOST COMMONPLACE. BUT THE STORY OF A LIEUTENANT AND HIS PLATOON OF SOLDIERS WAS ONE OF THE STRANGEST TO COME OUT OF THE WAR...

THE LIEUTENANT AND HIS MEN WERE BOGGED DOWN AT THE FOOT OF A HILL HELD BY THE ENEMY. FIRING WAS HEAVY FROM A MACHINE GUN NEST AT THE TOP...

THE BOCHES ARE THROWING ALL THEY HAVE AT US BOY LIEUTENANT!

WE MUST ELIMINATE THEM! THEY'RE HOLDING UP THE ENTIRE DIVISION!

BOOM!



UNDER THE COVER OF DARKNESS, THE LOYAL SOLDIERS BROUGHT THEIR LEADER TO AN AID STATION IN BACK OF THE LINES...

... WE MUST GET BACK TO MY MEN!

HE LOOKS BAD! I DON'T THINK HE'LL LIVE!



THE BOCHES CHARGE!

THE LIEUTENANT'S BACK!... AT THE BOCHE!

THE RIDGE WAS TAKEN, BUT THE LIEUTENANT HAD VANISHED! THE SOLDIERS RETURNED TO THE AID STATION, ONLY TO FIND...



THE LIEUTENANT STARTED A CHARGE...

ALLONS, MY SOLDIERS! LET'S GET THEM! ATTACK! MOVE UP! OHHH!

THEY GOT THE LIEUTENANT!



THE NEXT MORNING IN THEIR TRENCHES, THE SOLDIERS MOURNED THEIR ABSENT LEADER...

WHAT BAD LUCK! JUST WHEN WE HAD A CHANCE TO KNOCK OFF THE ENEMY!

LOOK! IT'S THE LIEUTENANT! HE HAS RETURNED!



LIEUTENANT BRIANDE? WHY, HE DIED LAST NIGHT, SOON AFTER HE WAS BROUGHT IN! YOU MEN MUST HAVE BEEN IMAGINING THINGS! BUT YOU DID A FINE JOB ON YOUR OWN!

WHO KNOWS WHAT FIRES THE SPIRIT OF MEN ENGAGED IN PATRIOTIC EFFORT? THE DAUNTLESS COURAGE OF THE LIEUTENANT HAD STAYED WITH HIS MEN, AND HAD INSPIRED THEM. AS TO WHO LED THE CHARGE THAT DAY, IF ANYONE ACTUALLY DID, NO ONE WILL EVER KNOW.



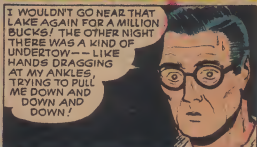
The End

The Lorelei of Loon Lake

I USED TO SMILE WHEN PEOPLE TALKED OF STRANGE UNUSUAL HAPPENINGS... THE KIND THEY THOUGHT WERE BEYOND HUMAN KEN. I THOUGHT SUCH STORIES WERE THE PRODUCT OF WARPED SUPERSTITIOUS MINDS. THERE HAD TO BE A COLD, LOGICAL EXPLANATION FOR EVERYTHING, I THOUGHT. I STILL BELIEVE IN LOGIC, BUT I AM AWARE NOW THAT EXTRAORDINARY FAITH, UNSWERVING LOVE MAY SOMETIMES GIVE SPECIAL MEANING TO AN INCIDENT... AN INCIDENT FOR EXAMPLE, LIKE THE ONE THAT HAPPENED DURING MY VACATION AT LOON LAKE



AT MIDNIGHT, HOPING A COLD PLUNGE IN THE LAKE WOULD RID ME OF THE STRANGE RESTLESSNESS THAT HAD BEEN KEEPING ME AWAKE...



POOR LUKE BROWN WAS THE TIMID TYPE WHO WAS ALWAYS SEEING, HEARING, AND FEELING THINGS IN THE DARK. HIS SCARY TALK MADE ME LAUGH. WHAT WAS THERE TO BE AFRAID OF?



BRRR! KIND OF A QUIET, SPOOKY NIGHT, AT THAT! CHILLY, TOO! MAYBE IT IS FOOLISH TO GO SWIMMING ALONE ON A NIGHT LIKE THIS!



SHIVERING, AND FILLED WITH UNEXPLAINABLE UNEASINESS, I WAS JUST ABOUT TO RETURN TO THE LODGE WHEN A WOMAN'S VOICE ECHOED THROUGH THE MOON-WHITE NIGHT, FROM THE DIRECTION OF THE WATER, CALLING MY NAME...



THAT WATER SURE LOOKS COLD AND FORBIDDING! BETTER GET THIS OVER WITH FAST!



REASSURED AT THE PROSPECT OF COMPANY FOR MY SWIM, I CONTINUED ON DOWN TO THE BATHING PIER, ONLY TO FIND IT DESERTED...

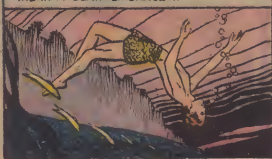
BUT--THAT VOICE CALLING ME! WHOEVER WAS HERE MUST'VE LEFT IN A HURRY! UNLESS IT WAS JUST MY IMAGINATION! I'M GETTING AS BAD AS LUKE!



AS I CUT DOWN THROUGH THE DARKNESS, TOO LATE I SAW A PARTIALLY SUBMERGED LOG IN THE GLITTERING WATER. MY HEAD STRUCK IT. A MILLION BELLS STARTED GONGING IN MY EARS. THIS, UNLIKE THE VOICE I'D IMAGINED I'D HEARD, WAS REAL...



SEMI-CONSCIOUS, I FELT MYSELF SINKING INTO THE MURKY DEPTHS OF THE LAKE, THE SOFTLY EDDING WATER CLOSING AROUND ME IN A DEATH EMBRACE...



SPRAWLED HELPLESSLY ON THE LAKE-BOTTOM, I WAS UNABLE TO MOVE, BUT STILL PARTLY CONSCIOUS. THROUGH THE EERIE UNDER-WATER GLOW, IT SEEMED TO MY STRICKEN EYES A BEAUTIFUL GIRL, A STRANGER, WAS SWIMMING TOWARD ME

DON'T BE AFRAID, ROY! I'LL SAVE YOU!



I KNEW THAT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE TO TALK UNDER WATER, YET MY BENUMBED SENSES IMAGINED THEY DISTINCTLY HEARD HER. WHEN SHE TOOK MY HAND, SOME UNCONTROLLABLE POWER SEEMED TO FORCE ME TO OBEY HER COMMANDS...

COME WITH ME, ROY LYNN! I'LL SAVE YOUR LIFE IF YOU'LL DO A FAVOR FOR ME IN RETURN!



I FELT THAT THIS COULDN'T BE HAPPENING! THIS MUST BE SOME SEMI-CONSCIOUS DREAM, FOLLOWING MY HEAD IN JURY. STILL, I WAS FILLED WITH A NAMELESS DREAD AS SHE LED ME TOWARD...

... AN UNDER-WATER CAVE!

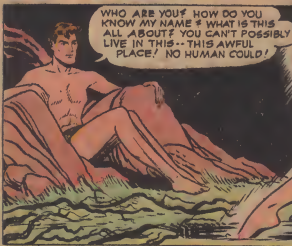
THIS IS MY HOME! DON'T BE AFRAID, ROY! YOU'LL BE SAFE HERE! BUT BE CAREFUL! DON'T GET YOUR FOOT CAUGHT IN THE ROOTS



INSIDE THIS CAVERN THERE WAS A DANK, TOMB-LIKE STILLNESS. THERE WAS A STRANGE GLOW OVER EVERYTHING. MY PULSE WAS POUNDING WITH FEAR OF WHAT MIGHT BE AHEAD. I FELT AS THOUGH I WERE ABOUT TO LEARN SOME DREAD AND TIMELESS SECRET WHICH I WANTED TO KNOW—YET I WAS AFRAID...



WHO ARE YOU? HOW DO YOU KNOW MY NAME? WHAT IS THIS ALL ABOUT? YOU CAN'T POSSIBLY LIVE IN THIS--THIS AWFUL PLACE! NO HUMAN COULD!



MY NAME IS LOLA. I CAN'T ANSWER ALL YOUR QUESTIONS, ROY. THERE ARE SOME THINGS IT'S BETTER YOU NEVER KNOW. PERHAPS I DO NOT EVEN KNOW MYSELF. ALL I CAN TELL YOU IS THAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO COME. I NEED HELP!



THERE WAS A SAD, HAUNTING TONE TO HER VOICE AS SHE SHOWED ME AROUND HER CAVE-HOME. THERE WAS A NIGHTMARISH QUALITY ABOUT ALL THAT WAS HAPPENING, AS IF EVEN IN ITS STARTLING VIVIDNESS IT WASN'T ACTUALLY REAL....

IT'S QUIET AND PEACEFUL, AND I'M HAPPY HERE, DOWN UNDER THE WATER OF THE LAKE, ROY. EXCEPT FOR ONE THING. I CAN'T SLEEP! I'M SO TERRIBLY TIRED! I MUST SLEEP, BUT I CAN'T UNLESS YOU WILL HELP ME!



SOMETHING'S PREYING ON MY MIND. IF I CAN GET IT OFF, I'LL REST PEACEFULLY. I'M WORRIED ABOUT ANDY. WHEN YOU LEAVE HERE, ROY, YOU'VE GOT TO FIND HIM, GIVE HIM A MESSAGE FROM ME, AND THEN PERHAPS I'LL BE ALL RIGHT!



I WATCHED HER REMOVE A RING, CARVED INTO A MOST UNUSUAL SHAPE, FROM HER FINGER..



IT WAS WILL-LESS, UNABLE TO RESIST, AS SHE SLIPPED THE QUAIN-LOOKING RING ONTO MY OWN HAND...

MY CONSTANT QUESTIONING SEEMED TO UPSET HER AND SHE COULDN'T ANSWER ME. ALL SHE SAID WAS...

AS HER WORDS TRAILED OFF, THREATENINGLY, I QUICKLY AGREED TO DO AS SHE SAID. SHE SMILED AND SEEMED SATISFIED. WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, SHE LED ME TO THE MOUTH OF THE CAVE, AND OUT INTO THE WATER AGAIN...

THIS RING WILL PROVE TO ANDY THAT YOU'VE REALLY SEEN ME AND HE'LL KNOW THAT THE MESSAGE IS TRUE!

THIS IS INSANE! ANDY WHO? WHAT'S HIS LAST NAME? WHERE WILL I FIND HIM?

FIND ANDY AND TELL HIM THAT LOLA FORGIVES HIM, DOESN'T BLAME HIM FOR WHAT HAPPENED! TELL HIM THAT I'M HAPPY AND AT PEACE. YOU'VE GOT TO DO THIS FOR ME, ROY, WITHOUT FURTHER QUESTIONS! IF I DON'T GET YOU OUT OF HERE SOON...



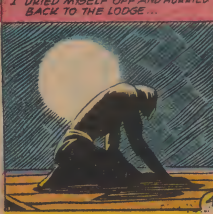
GOOD-BY, ROY!

LOLA! WAIT! DON'T LEAVE ME OUT HERE ALONE! I--I'LL DROWN!

SUDDENLY MY LUNGS SEEMED ABOUT TO BURST. SOMETHING SEEMED TO EXPLODE IN MY HEAD. I FORGOT ABOUT LOLA AND THE STRANGE THINGS THAT HAD HAPPENED. I HAD ONLY ONE THOUGHT--TO FIGHT MY WAY TO THE SURFACE AND BREATHE AGAIN...

THAT WAS (GASP) A CLOSE CALL! ANOTHER FEW SECONDS DOWN THERE AND I'D HAVE BEEN A GONER!

ALREADY, LOLA AND THE UNDER-WATER CAVE WERE BEGINNING TO FADE AND BECOME CONFUSED AND UNREAL IN MY MIND. I TOLD MYSELF THAT IT HAD ALL BEEN A DREAM FANTASY RESULTING FROM THE BLOW ON THE HEAD I RECEIVED WHEN I STRUCK THE FLOATING LOG. I DRIED MYSELF OFF AND HURRIED BACK TO THE LODGE...



HEY! THAT WAS SOME SWIM YOU TOOK LAST NIGHT, ROY! YOU MUST'VE MET A BEAUTIFUL MERMAID, NOT COMING BACK FOR TWENTY-FOUR HOURS!

DON'T BE SILLY! ROY COULDN'T HAVE BEEN DOWN AT THE LAKE SINCE LAST NIGHT! HE MUST HAVE COME IN THE BACKWAY LAST NIGHT, AND GONE OUT THE SAME WAY AGAIN TONIGHT FOR ANOTHER SWIM! ISN'T THAT RIGHT, ROY?



THEIR LAUGHING WORDS CHANGED THE MARROW IN MY BONES TO ICE! WHAT WERE THEY TALKING ABOUT? I COULDN'T HAVE BEEN GONE 24 HOURS! IT WAS THE SAME NIGHT! IT HAD TO BE! I STARTED TO TELL THEM ABOUT WHAT HAD HAPPENED, BUT SOMETHING SEEMED TO STOP ME!

I--WELL, YES-- I GUESS IT--IT WAS SOMETHING LIKE THAT!



MY HORRIFIED GAZE SWEEPED TO THE WALL CALENDAR. I SAW THAT THEY WERE RIGHT. IT WAS ON WEDNESDAY, THE 13TH, THAT I HAD LEFT THIS ROOM AND GONE DOWN TO THE LAKE FOR THAT LATE SWIM...

I WENT TO MY ROOM, SICK WITH WORRY, MY HEAD THROB-BING. THE BIZARRE EVENTS THAT HAD HAPPENED KEPT RETURNING TO MY MIND. I PACED THE ROOM, CONVINCED THAT MY BRAIN HAD BEEN SERIOUSLY INJURED WHEN MY HEAD STRUCK THE FLOATING LOG. DETERMINED TO SEE A DOCTOR IN THE MORNING, I FLUNG MYSELF ON THE BED FOR A LAST SMOKE BEFORE FALLING INTO AN EXHAUSTED, NIGHTMARE-RIDDEN SLUMBER...



BRIGHT AND EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, I VISITED THE OFFICE OF THE ONLY LOCAL DOCTOR, A WORRIED-LOOKING MAN ONLY A LITTLE OLDER THAN MYSELF...

DR. MANNING? YES, SIR. COME RIGHT IN!



BRIEFLY AND CALMLY AS POSSIBLE, I RELATED TO HIM ALL THE EVENTS OF THE NIGHT AT THE LAKE. RIGHT FROM THE FIRST, I NOTICED THAT HIS PROFESSIONAL CALM WAS RUFFLED. HE WAS VISIBLY DISTURBED BY MY STORY...

BUT THAT--THAT'S PREPOSTEROUS, MR. LYNN. I--I'M AFRAID YOU'RE SUFFERING FROM HALLUCINATIONS! I'LL MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR TESTS AND SKULL X-RAYS...



HIS WORDS JAMMED IN HIS THROAT AS I REMOVED THE RING LOLA HAD GIVEN ME AND SHOWED IT TO HIM. HE GAVE A CHOKING, STRANGLING CRY OF RECOGNITION!

MY MEDICAL SCHOOL FRATERNITY RING! THE ONE I GAVE LOLA! NO! NO!



THIS-- THIS IS TOO MUCH! I THOUGHT AT FIRST YOUR STORY WAS SOME KIND OF HOAX, BUT NOW I KNOW IT CAN'T BE. YOU SEE, MY-- MY FIRST NAME IS ANDY! I'M THE ONE LOLA WAS TALKING ABOUT! SHE WAS WEARING THAT RING THE NIGHT THAT SHE DISAPPEARED-- TEN YEARS AGO!



DR. ANDY MANNING TOLD A STRANGE STORY. HE AND LOLA WALTERS HAD BEEN ENGAGED. THEY HAD QUARRELED VIOLENTLY ONE NIGHT OVER ANDY'S POSTPONING THEIR MARRIAGE UNTIL AFTER HIS INTERNSHIP WAS UP. FOR SEVERAL DAYS LOLA WAS DESPONDENT, AND ANDY WAS TOO STUBBORN TO GIVE IN. HE NEVER SAW HER AGAIN. SHE WENT SWIMMING ONE NIGHT AT THE LAKE WITH A GROUP OF FRIENDS. SHE WENT OUT TOO FAR. SOMEONE HEARD HER CRY OUT, BUT SHE NEVER CAME BACK. IT WAS NEVER KNOWN WHETHER SHE DROWNED OR SWAM BACK TO SHORE AT SOME OTHER POINT AND THEN DISAPPEARED...

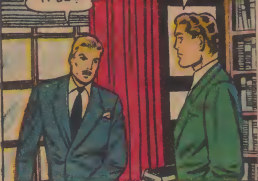
THEY DRAGGED THE LAKE, LOOKING FOR HER ALL THAT WEEK. NOTHING WAS EVER FOUND. AS TIME WENT ON, I TRIED TO FORGET HER, BUT I COULDN'T. I'VE WORRIED ABOUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO HER. I FELT GUILTY, THAT IT WAS ALL MY FAULT. IF I HADN'T BEEN SUCH A STUBBORN FOOL...

LOLA TOLD ME THAT IT WASN'T YOUR FAULT, DOC! YOU CAN STOP TORTURING YOURSELF NOW!



YES, IF WHAT YOU SAY IS TRUE! BUT IS IT? HOW COULD IT BE?

I'M NOT SURE, BUT SOMEHOW I THINK THAT IT IS!



WE DECIDED THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE WAY OF FINDING OUT. TOGETHER WE WENT TO A SPORTING GOODS STORE, AND PURCHASED A PAIR OF DIVING HELMETS...

THESE OUGHT TO DO THE TRICK!

MAYBE WE'D BETTER FORGET THE WHOLE THING, DOC.



BUT I COULDN'T TALK HIM OUT OF IT. DR. MANNING SAID HE'D NEVER REST UNTIL HE'D CHECKED ON MY STORY. SO AN HOUR LATER, WE PREPARED TO DESCEND TOGETHER INTO THE COLD, SECRET WATERS OF THE LAKE...



IN THE MURKY, SHADOW WORLD OF THE LAKE BOTTOM, I LED THE WAY IN WHAT I HOPED WAS THE DIRECTION OF THE CAVE. MY HEART WAS LEAPING LIKE A WILD THING. MY STOMACH WAS LIKE A LUMP OF LEAD, AS I DREADED WHAT WE MIGHT, OR MIGHT NOT, FIND!



WEAK-KNEED AND TREMBLING, AS WE FOUND THE UNDER-WATER CAVERN, I FORCED MYSELF TO LEAD DOC INSIDE. WE WERE BOTH ON THE EDGE OF PANIC AS WE MOVED THROUGH THE GMINOUSLY PRESSING SILENCE OF THE SWIRLING WATER...



THE SHOCKING SIGHT THAT WE GAZED DOWN UPON IN THE DIMNESS OF THE UNDER-WATER CAVE WAS TOO MUCH FOR THE DOCTOR! HIS LEGS GAVE WAY AND HE WOULD HAVE FALLEN IF I HADN'T CAUGHT HIM. HIS BELOVED LOLA, RECOGNIZABLE BY THE FLOWING MANE OF HER LONG RED HAIR, HAD HAD HER FOOT CAUGHT BY A TWISTED ROOT....



THE DOCTOR QUICKLY RECOVERED, FACING THE TRUTH, THOUGH PAINFUL, WAS NOT NEARLY AS BAD AS THE HARROWING UNCERTAINTY OF NOT KNOWING.



AFTER THAT, WE LOST NO TIME MAKING OUR WAY TO THE SURFACE AGAIN. BOTH TREMBLING LIKE A HOUND DOG IN A GHOST-MOON, WE EMERGED INTO THE WELCOME WARMTH OF DAYLIGHT AND CLIMBED BACK ONTO THE PIER...

WE DRESSED AND RETURNED TO DR. MANNING'S OFFICE, I KNEW NOW WHAT HAD HAPPENED. I MUST HAVE HEARD OR READ SOMEWHERE THE STORY OF LOLA, AND THE BLOW ON MY HEAD BROUGHT IT ALL BACK AND CREATED THE HALLUCINATION OF THAT UNDER-SEA ADVENTURE. GROPING TO REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS, I HAD FOUND THE RING...

AS I LEFT THE DOC'S OFFICE, I, TOO, FELT STRANGELY AT PEACE. I SOMEHOW DIDN'T THINK I'D HAVE ANY TROUBLE SLEEPING AGAIN. IT WOULDN'T BE LIKE THAT OTHER SLEEP WHEN, CRAWLING OUT OF THE LAKE, I HAD LAMN INERT FOR A WHOLE DAY...

HURRY, DOC! WE'VE GOT TO GET RID OF THIS DIVING EQUIPMENT BEFORE SOMEBODY SPOTS US AND STARTS ASKING A LOT OF QUESTIONS WE CAN'T ANSWER!



IT WAS A HORRIBLE SHOCK, ROY, BUT IN SOME WAYS I FEEL BETTER ALREADY, AS THOUGH A WEIGHT WAS LIFTED FROM MY MIND! SOMETIMES I WONDER IF WE HUMANS—EVEN DOCTORS—KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT LIFE—OR DEATH! GOOD—BY, ROY!

SO LONG, DOC!



BACK AT LOON LAKE LODGE I PACKED AND QUICKLY LEFT. THE SUNSET WAS SPREADING AN EERIE GLOW OVER EVERYTHING AND THE WIND WAS SIGHING THROUGH THE TREES. I FOUGHT OFF THE CHILL THAT SHOOK ME AND I KNEW THAT I WOULD NEVER COME HERE AGAIN. AS I WALKED AWAY, I DIDN'T EVEN LOOK BACK. I DIDN'T DARE!



THE END

BAFFLING MYSTERIES

ONE OF THE MOST FASCINATING SPORTS IN THE WORLD IS SKIING, AND MANY MEN, TESTING THEIR HARDHOOD AND COURAGE, OFTEN ATTEMPT HAZARDOUS RUNS AND JUMPS, SOMETIMES RESULTING IN ACCIDENTS. THE STRANGE INCIDENT THAT FOLLOWS TOOK PLACE AT A FAMOUS SKI RUN IN THE SWISS ALPS IN 1936. THE WITNESS WAS AN AMERICAN NAMED HOMER TROY...

THERE IT IS, MR. TROY! ONE OF THE MOST DANGEROUS SKI JUMPS IN THE WORLD!

I'M ALMOST AFRAID TO ATTEMPT THE JUMP MYSELF!



THAT VERY NIGHT OF TROY'S ARRIVAL, HE WAS TAKING A LONE WALK, WHEN HE SAW...

WHA...! SOMEONE'S RACING DOWN THE JUMP! WHO WOULD ATTEMPT A LEAP AT THIS HOUR OF THE NIGHT?



GOOD GRIEF! HE'S TRYING A TRICKY SOMERSAULT BEFORE COMING DOWN! HE'LL BE KILLED!



I KNEW IT! HIS BODY MUST BE HORRIBLY BROKEN!



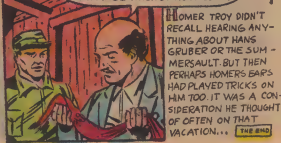
TH-THERE'S NO BODY HERE! COMPLETELY VANISHED! BUT THIS SCARF... INITIALS H.G.! WHAT CAN IT ALL MEAN?



THE NEXT MORNING, TROY TOLD HIS STORY TO THE SWISS LODGE OWNER...

I'M SURE I DIDN'T IMAGINE IT!

H.G.! HANS GRUBER! HE TRIED THAT FOOLISH SOMERSAULT TRICK LAST WEEK! GRAVELY INJURED! YOU MUST HAVE HEARD OF IT...AND IN THE MOONLIGHT YOUR EYES PLAYED STRANGE TRICKS / HOW ELSE?



HOMER TROY DIDN'T RECALL HEARING ANYTHING ABOUT HANS GRUBER OR THE SOMERSAULT. BUT THEN PERHAPS HOMER'S EARS HAD PLAYED TRICKS ON HIM TOO. IT WAS A CONSIDERATION HE THOUGHT OF OFTEN ON THAT VACATION...

THE END

The PHANTOM Model

I'VE COME CLEAR FROM AVIGNON TO
BEG YOU TO COME BACK WITH ME, BUT
ALL YOU TELL ME IS THAT YOU CANNOT
LEAVE YOUR PAINTING! YOU MUST LIKE
TO LIVE IN THIS... THIS FILTH
AND POVERTY!

NO, LUCILLE, IT IS ONLY FOR A
WHILE, UNTIL MY WORK SELLS! IF
YOU WOULD MARRY ME, STAY HERE
AND BE MY MODEL, MY GREAT
INSPIRATION -- I KNOW I
WOULD SUCCEED!

A STately HOME, AN IMMENSE FAMILY FORTUNE, AN
ADORING FIANCEE -- ALL THESE VICTOR TIZA LEFT BEHIND
HIM IN AVIGNON FOR A COLD STUDIO GARRET IN PARIS. FOR
VICTOR HAD THE SOUL OF AN ARTIST AND HE BURNED WITH
THE FLAMING AMBITION TO EVOKE BEAUTY ON CANVAS, TO
CAPTURE IN RIGIDUS COLOR THE DEEPEST PASSIONS OF
HIS HEART. YET ALL ALONG HE WAS TO KNOW ONLY
POVERTY, FOR HIS FAMILY HAD DISOWNED HIM AND NOW
EVEN LUCILLE, HIS FIANCEE WAS READY TO ABANDON
HIM AS A LOST CAUSE...

NEVER! I WILL ONLY MARRY YOU IF YOU RETURN
TO AVIGNON TO YOUR FATHER'S LEATHER BUSINESS
WHERE YOU RIGHTFULLY BELONG!
I WOULD NEVER CONSIDER
LIVING IN THIS
PIGSTY!!

LUCILLE, PLEASE!
GIVE ME A CHANCE TO
THINK! DON'T GO
BACK YET!

VICTOR BROODED AS LUCILLE RETURNED TO HER
HOTEL...

LUCILLE WANTS ME, BUT I CANNOT GIVE
UP MY WORK FOR HER! YET THIS LACK OF MONEY
PLAGUES ME! I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO AFFORD
A MODEL FOR SIX MONTHS, AND JUST WHEN I
HAVE ARRIVED AT THE PEAK OF MY POWERS!

SUDDENLY...

THERE IS THE ANSWER TO MY PRAYERS / SUCH BEAUTY I HAVE NOT SEEN IN ALL OF PARIS... A FACE I HAVE DREAMED OF AND HAIR LIKE BURSTING SUNSETS / BUT HOW CAN I GET HER TO MODEL FOR ME?



SHE SMILES...MAYBE THERE IS HOPE FOR ME / I MUST SPEAK TO HER AT ONCE /



RUSHING DOWNSTAIRS TO THE ADJOINING HOUSE...

MADAME LA CONCIERGE, PLEASE, WHO IS THAT LOVELY RED-HEADED GIRL WHO LIVES IN THE SOUTH APARTMENT ON THE THIRD FLOOR?

RED-HEADED GIRL? THERE IS NO WOMAN WITH RED HAIR IN THIS BUILDING AND THE SOUTH APARTMENT HAS BEEN VACANT FOR MONTHS!



BUT I TELL YOU, I SAW HER... A VISION OF LOVELINESS!

BAH / ALL YOU ARTISTS ARE ALIKE... TOO LITTLE FOOD AND TOO MANY DREAMS / COME-- I WILL SHOW YOU!



VOILA / WHERE IS YOUR RED-HEAD? I TOLD YOU THE APARTMENT WAS EMPTY!

IT CAN'T BE! SHE WAS AT THE WINDOW / I WAS AWAKE... IT WAS NOT A DREAM!



HAH, WHAT IS THIS COMB DOING HERE, THEN? SHE STOOD RIGHT AT THAT WINDOW!

THAT DOES NOT PROVE ANYTHING! IT WAS PROBABLY LEFT BY THE LAST TENANT / LEAVE! I CANNOT WASTE TIME WITH SUCH FOOLISHNESS!



AS EVENING FELL, VICTOR WALKED DESPONDENTLY TO THE SEINE TO PONDER HIS PROBLEM...

I WILL NEVER BE HAPPY BACK IN AVIGNON, EVEN WITH LUCILLE AS MY WIFE / PAINTING IS MY FIRST LOVE... BUT WITHOUT A MODEL IT IS IMPOSSIBLE!



SUDDENLY!

THAT WOMAN... SHE IS
GOING TO THROW HERSELF
IN THE SEINE / NO! NO!
WAIT! DON'T JUMP!

IT IS WRONG
TO TAKE
YOUR OWN
LIFE!
LISTEN
TO ME!

GO AWAY... PLEASE!
THERE IS NOTHING
ABOUT ME THAT
CONCERNS YOU!

WHY, IT IS YOU...
THE GIRL IN THE
WINDOW! HOW
STRANGE THAT I
SHOULD FIND YOU
HERE! YOU ARE
FAR LOVELIER
THAN I
IMAGINED!

YOU ARE WRONG,
MONSIEUR--I HAVE
NEVER SEEN YOU!
AND AS FOR MY
'BEAUTY, IT IS A
CURSE...AS BEAUTY
CAN SO OFTEN BE!
HARM CAN BEFALL
IT'S OWNER AS
WELL AS OTHERS!

LOVELY CREATURE, YOU
COULD NOT HARM A BLADE OF
GRASS! YET YOU SHOULD
NOT BE ALONE RIGHT NOW.
COME--I WILL TAKE YOU TO
MY STUDIO...BEING INDOORS
WILL MAKE YOU FEEL
BETTER!

YOU ARE SO KIND
TO POOR ODETTE!
PERHAPS I WAS
WRONG TO THINK
THAT THE WHOLE
WORLD WAS TOO
CRUEL!

BACK IN VICTOR'S STUDIO...

ODETTE, YOU MUST NOT
REFUSE ME! I HAVE
SEARCHED FOR YEARS FOR
A MODEL LIKE YOU, AND
NOW MY HANDS ACHES
TO PAINT YOU!

YOU SAVED MY LIFE,
VICTOR! I WOULD BE
UNGRATEFUL TO
SAY NO!

AT LAST THE POOR
FOOL IS CAUGHT!

AH, THAT IS JUST PERFECT!
I KNOW WHAT I WILL CALL
THIS PAINTING... "QUEEN
OF THE SEINE!"

I HOPE YOU
PAINT AS WELL AS
YOU FLATTER ME,
VICTOR!

VICTOR PAINTED FURIOUSLY FAR INTO THE NIGHT...

HOLD THAT EXPRESSION,
ODETTE! IT IS JUST WHAT
I WANT--A SMILE SWEETER
AND Sadder THAN THE
MONA LISA'S!

WHAT A SURPRISE
VICTOR IS
IN FOR!

EXHAUSTION OVERCAME VICTOR BEFORE HIS PAINTING WAS FINISHED...

DAWN BREAKS! THE FOOL IS ASLEEP AND THE PORTRAIT IS NOT COMPLETED! MY CHANCE WILL COME LATER, BUT I WILL RETURN, FOR HIS SOUL WILL NEVER REST UNTIL HE HAS FOUND ME AGAIN!



WHEN VICTOR AWOKE, HE WAS FRANTIC...

ODETTE, ODETTE, WHERE ARE YOU? WHY DID SHE LEAVE ME? HER PORTRAIT IS NOT FINISHED!



WHY DIDN'T SHE WAIT 'TILL I FINISHED... WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? I MUST FINISH THIS PORTRAIT, EVEN IF ODETTE IS NOT HERE!

DO NOT SEEK ME AGAIN. IF OUR DESTINY IS THAT WE MEET, SO BE IT! OTHERWISE!

Odette



LATER...

AT LAST I AM FINISHED... NOW, WHO CAN THAT BE? PERHAPS ODETTE HAS RETURNED!



OH...IT'S YOU! I—I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE COMING, LUCILLE!

WHY, WHOM DID YOU EXPECT?



I SEE YOU HAVE FOUND A MODEL, AND FROM THE LOOKS OF IT YOU PAINTED ALL NIGHT! WHERE IS THIS NOCTURNAL CREATURE?

LUCILLE, I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING!



THIS IS HOW YOU HAVE KEPT YOUR FAITH! I WAS INDEED A FOOL TO RETURN!

LUCILLE, YOU ARE MISTAKEN! PLEASE LET ME TELL YOU THE WHOLE STORY!



VICTOR'S REMORSE WAS BRIEF AS HE TURNED TO THE PAINTING...

NOTHING ELSE MATTERS BUT THE BEAUTY ON THIS CANVAS! I WILL TAKE IT TO JACQUES LEMARTIN FOR HIS OPINION. HE SHOULD KNOW ITS VALUE, FOR HE IS THE DEAN OF ALL FRENCH PAINTERS!



BUT LEMARTIN COULDN'T SEE HIM THAT DAY. SO VICTOR RETURNED WITH HIS WRAPPED CANVAS. NEXT DAY...

PLEASE, MONSIEUR LEMARTIN, THIS IS MY GREATEST WORK! IT IS INSPIRED! YOU MUST TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK!

BUT YOU ARE AN UNKNOWN, UNEXHIBITED! I CANNOT WASTE MY VALUABLE TIME. OH, ALL RIGHT, BUT JUST FOR A MOMENT!



WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?

WHY... IT'S CRUEL, INHUMAN! SO TERRIFYINGLY REALISTIC! SUCH THINGS CANNOT SELL!



BUT— NO, IT CAN'T BE! THIS IS NOT THE PORTRAIT I PAINTED! IT IS NOT THE ODETTE WHO POSED FOR ME!

THERE IS SOMETHING STRANGELY FAMILIAR ABOUT HER!



YOU MUST GET OUT OF PAINTING RIGHT AWAY! IT IS NOT FOR YOU! YOUR WORK IS SICK AND SHOWS TOO MUCH PREOCCUPATION WITH DEATH!

I—I CANNOT UNDERSTAND!



IN DESPAIR, VICTOR CALLED LUCILLE TO DINE WITH HIM THAT EVENING...

I SHOWED LEMARTIN THE PAINTING AND THEN I SAW THIS HORRIBLE TRANSFORMATION! I MUST HAVE BEEN IN A COMA WHEN I PAINTED IT!

YOU MUST COME AWAY FROM PARIS AT ONCE, VICTOR! AFTER THIS, IT WOULD BE MADNESS TO STAY HERE!



SUDDENLY, VICTOR'S HEART STOOD STILL...

VICTOR-- WHAT IS THE MATTER? ARE YOU ILL?

IT IS SHE... ODETTE! I MUST SPEAK TO HER!



ODETTE! WAIT FOR ME!
I MUST SPEAK TO YOU!
LET ME GO, LUCILLE!

VICTOR! I NEVER
SAW YOU THIS WAY!
WHAT'S COME OVER
YOU?



LIKE A DRUGGED SONNAMBULIST, VICTOR PURSUED
THE FLEETING VISION OF ODETTE...

ODETTE, COME
BACK! DON'T RUN
AWAY!

LOOK OUT, YOU IDIOT! ARE
YOU TRYING TO GET
YOURSELF KILLED!



ODETTE, COME BACK HERE!
IT IS VICTOR! PLEASE
DON'T LEAVE ME!



HAVE YOU SEEN A YOUNG WOMAN...
BEAUTIFUL, WITH RED HAIR? SHE
JUST RAN DOWN THIS
STREET!

MANY YOUNG
WOMEN COME HERE,
MONSIEUR... ALSO MANY
MEN AND CHILDREN.
AFTER ALL THIS IS A
STREET LIKE A
HUNDRED
OTHERS!



VICTOR WANDERED OFF, DAZED,
AS HIS FEET CARRIED HIM TO
THE SEINE. SUDDENLY...

THAT HAIR! IT CAN'T BE
ANYONE ELSE! ODETTE,
WAIT FOR ME!



YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE
FOLLOWED ME AGAIN,
VICTOR! BUT NOW THAT
YOU ARE HERE, I WILL
DO ANYTHING YOU ASK!

I DON'T WANT ANY
EXPLANATIONS, ODETTE.
THEY WILL NEVER
REVEAL YOUR STRANGE
STORY! ALL I WANT IS
TO PAINT YOU AS YOU
REALLY ARE! I BURN
WITH THAT DESIRE-- I
LOVE YOU, ODETTE!



VICTOR LABORED ALL NIGHT, POURING HIS SMOLDERING
SOUL ONTO THE BLANK CANVAS, UNTIL FINALLY...

LOVELY QUEEN OF THE SEINE! AT LAST IT IS
FINISHED! I AM EXHAUSTED! I MUST REST
AWHILE OR I WILL FAINT! LET ME
NAP A BIT!

I AM SURE YOU
HAVE PAINTED
MAGNIFICENTLY!



WHILE VICTOR WEARY, RESTED...

HOW EASY...HOW EASY IT ALL IS! THESE PAINTERS, SO CONSUMED WITH THEIR ART, FORGET IF A KEY IS MISSING...OR THEIR APARTMENT ENTERED...IT WAS SO EASY TO CHANGE THE OTHER PAINTING...



WHEN VICTOR AWOKE...

ODETTE? SHE HAS DISAPPEARED AGAIN! AND THE PAINTING IS COVERED WITH HER VEIL!



AS VICTOR TORE THE VEIL ASIDE

NO! I MUST BE MAD! I DID NOT PAINT ODETTE! I PAINTED A MONSTROSITY OF A WOMAN!



MOMENTS LATER, OUTSIDE VICTOR'S STUDIO DOOR...

OH, MONSIEUR LEMARTIN, HOW ODD TO MEET YOU HERE! I AM LUCILLE MEDOC-- VICTOR'S FIANCEE!

I HAVE COME TO RETURN A STRANGE PAINTING WHICH VICTOR LEFT AT MY STUDIO! SHALL WE GO IN?



A CRY OF GRIEF BURST FROM LUCILLE'S LIPS...

VICTOR! WHAT HAS HAPPENED? MERCYFUL HEAVENS! HE WAS RANTED!

THEN I HAVE COME IN TIME! THE MODEL WHO POSED FOR HIM DID THIS! SHE IS ODETTE SARCEN, ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMEN IN FRANCE--WHO TRIES TO DRIVE ARTISTS OUT OF THEIR MIND!



WHAT A DREADFUL THING! BUT WHY DO THIS?

ODETTE'S MOTHER, A REMARKABLY BEAUTIFUL MODEL, FELL IN LOVE WITH AN ARTIST BUT WAS SPURNED BY HIM! THOUGH SHE MARRIED SOMEONE ELSE LATER, AND HAD A CHILD, SHE NEVER RECOVERED FROM THAT FIRST FATAL LOVE AND SLOWLY LANGUISHED AWAY.



BUT HOW COULD ODETTE! SHE SEEMS REVENGE FOR HER MOTHER'S SUFFERING! BY SHE DO -

SHE LEADS AN ARTIST ON... THEN STEALS BACK TO CHANGE THE PAINTING...TO MAKE HIM THINK HE'S OUT OF HIS MIND! I SUPPOSE SHE THINKS THAT WAY SHE IS DESTROYING ME - FOR I WAS THE LOVER WHO SPURNED HER MOTHER!



THE MUMMY'S CURSE

Fame was Eric Thorwald's god, and there was one person who stood in his way to the attainment of the degree of fame in the archaeological world which he sought. That person was Cass Lyman, the man who supplied the funds for Thorwald's excavations. Lyman's immense wealth enabled him to buy almost anything he wished, with little effort on his own part. Through the labor of Thorwald's hands and mind, he sought to buy that one thing which Thorwald desired most for himself.

A nicely worded, but legally unmistakable clause in their contract indicated that Lyman was to receive credit for most of what Eric Thorwald accomplished.

Thorwald studied the thin, delicate features of the mummified priestess for a moment. Then his gaze centered on the rectangular golden ornament fastened over her bosom.

There had been nothing really unusual about the exquisitely tooled golden asp at its center, for the sacred serpent of Egypt is found everywhere in the art of the Pharaohs. But when, recognizing the great value of the ornament, he had followed his natural impulse and begun fingering it to examine it more closely, something entirely unprecedented had happened.

A tiny catch had been released, and in response a slender spring of coiled wire had leaped, with the quickness of thought, from the asp's mouth. By some miraculous chance the two forking needles at the end of the spring had slipped between the fingers of one of his hands, without piercing the skin. If it had—well—Eric Thorwald had a fairly certain idea about what would have been his fate.

The tongue of the asp still protruded from his mouth. Cautiously Thorwald clutched the spring just below the point where the needles were fastened. Little beads of sweat broke out on his forehead when he noted the keenness of those slender points of hardened bronze, and the thin, harmless-looking coating of lusterless green substance that covered them. In Thorwald's mind there was a conviction that it was some deadly concoction prepared by a clever chemist in a temple laboratory of ancient Egypt.

"I'm satisfied, mummy," Thorwald whispered. "That is the way Cass Lyman will die!"

Thorwald wrote a brief message for Lyman. Then he left the tent and sought out Said among the tents of the workmen. In a few minutes, a truck was hurrying down the shadowy gorge toward Luxor in the Nile Valley ten miles away.

"Now for the remainder of what we must do," Thorwald mumbled when he was again alone with the mummy.

The mummy's breastplate bore a cartouche, or

hieroglyphic royal name, which Thorwald recognized as belonging to one or several of the thirteen Ramessid kings of the nineteenth and twentieth dynasties. Those ancient rulers each had such a host of names and titles that it was not always easy to keep them straight.

The breastplate was fastened to the mummy wrappings by means of a delicately wrought golden pin, the upper portion of which was fashioned in the form of the scarab or sacred beetle. It also bore an almost microscopic Ramessid cartouche.

Thorwald immediately saw the great value of the bit of jewelry. He had a similar though far less precious pin in his possession, which he knew he could substitute for this one with perfect impunity. No need to let the Cairo Museum take possession of it, as it certainly would do, backed up as it was by the law of Egypt regarding the distribution of antiques.

Donning a pair of gloves, he made the change quickly, being careful to rub incriminating fingerprints from the pin which he substituted for the more valuable one. Then, coolly he set to work on his more important task.

He took out his jackknife and wrapped a corner of his handkerchief about its blade. With the blade thus padded, so that it would leave no tell-tale scratches on the metal, he began to work the spiral spring, coil by coil, back into the golden asp's mouth. It was a nerve-racking ordeal, but at last it was accomplished. The poisoned needles disappeared into the maw of the serpent, and the clawlike catch held the asp's tongue in place.

Later when the truck returned from Luxor, Thorwald was cool and collected and ready to act his part perfectly.

Said was at the wheel, beside him was the short, paunchy figure of Cass Lyman, and squeezed in at the edge of the seat was another man. Thorwald gave a little inward start. He had not expected a third person. But no, it would make no difference.

"Hello, Thorwald!" Lyman greeted with a kind of barking joviality. "Came as quickly as I could to see for myself just how good our luck has been." Lyman pointed to the stranger beside him.

"This is Mahmud Abudi," Lyman offered informally. "Mr. Abudi didn't come along with me solely because he's interested in archaeology. You see he's connected with the Secret Service of the Egyptian police, and part of his business is to prevent fortunate Egyptologists from smuggling valuable antiques out of the country."

Thorwald's heart missed a beat on learning that this was a Secret Service man, but he quickly reassured himself. It was all the better that he should

have such a witness to Lyman's death. It would save many painful explanations. Fate was indeed on his side.

"And now," Lyman cut in, "let's have a look at the mummy you found, Thorwald. You say you haven't examined it at all yet?"

"Well," Thorwald said with a brief laugh, "I did lift the lid a little to peep in. Curiosity got the better of me to that extent. But I thought it best to wait until you had arrived here, before I did anything further."

The three men entered Thorwald's tent, and there the archaeological excavator witnessed the clever murder he had planned. Nothing went wrong, and he enjoyed every bit of the little drama, or almost every bit.

He gloated inwardly over the gurgling exclamation of surprise and pleasure which Lyman gave at sight of the golden bauble on the mummy's bosom. Equally pleasant was Lyman's greedy and automatic gesture to finger the golden instrument of death.

Then the trigger was sprung, and with a vicious, twanging sound, the golden asp struck! The powerful spring drove the poisoned needles deep into Cass Lyman's shoulder.

With a horrid shriek he leaped back, his features convulsed into a grin of mingled fear, surprise, and mortal agony. Then he stiffened, toppled; his blackening lips quivered, and he fell to the ground.

As was to be expected, Mahmud Abudi remained cool. With Thorwald, he leaped to Lyman's side, and together, they stretched his stiffening body on the floor of the tent.

"In the name of reason, what has happened?" Thorwald demanded, seemingly regaining possession of himself. "What can we do for him?"

Mahmud Abudi's ear was at Lyman's heart. He straightened and smiled faintly. "There is nothing we can do for him," he said slowly. "He is dead!"

Mahmud Abudi arose and strode to the mummy case, where the spring of the serpent's tongue still vibrated. He examined the golden pectoral briefly.

"The dark science of ancient Egypt seems to be responsible," he said. "It is a device evidently intended to work the undoing of tomb robbers. Rather strange. I have heard of such infernal machines, but I never saw one before. Of course, Mr. Thorwald, in situations like this it is necessary to make the most complete investigation possible. My presence here is very opportune. You say that no one touched anything in this coffin?" Mahmud Abudi questioned.

"Certainly not," Thorwald replied. "As I said, I peeped in, that was all. And I assure you that none of my men are allowed any liberties in my tent."

The Egyptian detective was looking at the mummy. "This is very queer, Mr. Thorwald," he stated. "Look!" His fat forefinger was pointing toward the lapis lazuli scarab of the pin which Thorwald had

substituted for the pin of gold ~~which was in the mummy's bosom~~ supported the golden pectoral on the mummy's bosom.

Thorwald smiled. "What is queer?" he questioned, in a perfect imitation of mild interest.

"See!" Mahmud Abudi replied. "This scarab ~~pin~~ bears the cartouche, *User-Ma-Ra-Mer-Amen*, one of the numerous names of the Pharaoh who is now known as Rameses III, while this breastplate ~~bears~~ the cartouche, *Sotep-En-Ra-Mer-Amen*, or *Rameses II*. Between the reigns of the two lies a gap of fifty-three years! Odd, don't you think, that a priestess, who obviously was buried at least half a century before Rameses III ascended the throne, should wear an amulet bearing his cartouche?"

"I think I understand, Mr. Thorwald. Even an expert can make such a trifling and not easily noticed mistake. These ancient monarchs had so many titles that it is difficult to remember them all correctly. But I must remind you that in Egypt, murder is a crime punishable by death!"

Thorwald's jaw tightened. "Is this an accusation?" he demanded levelly.

Mahmud Abudi shrugged. "Well, without a doubt the coffin was opened since it was removed from the tomb. Only you could have opened it. Oriental courts do not mince matters, as Western juries do so often. Clearly, you substituted this scarab pin for another probably much more valuable — one which you desired for yourself."

"In making the change, which required that you touch the breastplate repeatedly, you could not have remained unaware of its sinister purpose. There can be but one conclusion: That you willfully plotted the death of your employer, Cass Lyman!"

"The evidence is against you. Except for that trifling error of dates, you committed a perfect crime, invoking the dark wisdom of Ancient Egypt and assisting it with your own cleverness. Only you were careless. Just one small anachronism. How trivial!" Mahmud Abudi's tone was mocking.

Thorwald's mind had become suddenly a trifle hazy. He was caught! If he could only shoot his way out of this . . . his hand was creeping toward his hip pocket.

"Stop!" Mahmud Abudi commanded. His fist bulged in his coat pocket, and there was something angular and menacing clutched in that fist.

Thorwald's arms dropped to his sides. "All right," he said. He knew he was doomed by the curse of the mummified priestess for trying to rob her coffin.

An hour later a truck started out across the desert, headed for Luxor. In addition to an Egyptian detective and a young Egyptian driver, it bore a canvas-covered corpse, the coffin and body of an ancient priestess, and a sullen man. A man who watched the staring enamel and turquoise eyes of the mummy case before him and wondered in hazy fashion about the strange tricks of human destiny.

THE END

6 FURLONGS to YESTERDAY

COME BACK HERE, SAMMY, YOU CRAZY KID! THAT LOOSED COLT WILL KILL YOU!

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HIM? HE'S ALWAYS BEEN SCARED STIFF OF HORSES! HE WOULDN'T GO NEAR THEM!

EASY, SPOOK, OLD BOY! IT'S YOUR FRIEND, SAMMY!



IN THE STABLES OF COLONEL LEE, A WILD COLT, SO BLACK IT WAS NAMED SPOOK, WAS SO UNMANAGEABLE THAT EVERYBODY THOUGHT IT COULD NEVER BE GROOMED FOR THE RACETRACK. BUT YOUNG SAMMY RAND, STABLE BOY, HAD BUILT UP A STRONG FAITH IN THE COLT. AND AN EVEN STRONGER --AND VERY REMARKABLE-- FRIENDSHIP. IT WAS INEVITABLE THAT ONE DAY THE TEST WOULD COME ... WHEN BOY AND HORSE WOULD MEET AN UNFORESEEN CHALLENGE...

AT THE SOUND OF SAMMY'S VOICE, MIRACULOUSLY, THE MURDEROUS RAGE OF THE COLT QUIETED. HE BECAME COMPLETELY DOCILE, MEEKLY ALLOWING SAMMY RAND TO MOUNT HIM ...

I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT, COLONEL! I—I AM AFRAID OF HORSES, BUT NOT THIS ONE. I JUST KNOW HE WOULDN'T HURT ME!

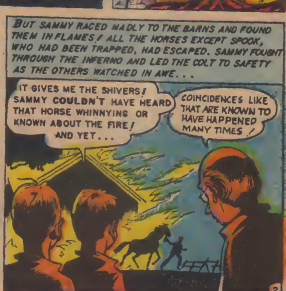
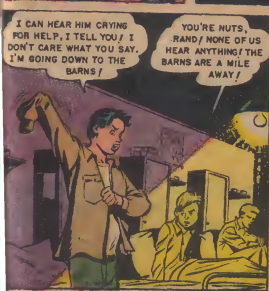
YOU SEEM TO HAVE HIS NUMBER, KID! I WAS WONDERING IF WE'D EVER GET ANYBODY TO RIDE HIM!



I DOUBT IF HE'S GOT ENOUGH SPEED TO RACE UNDER MY COLORS, EVEN IF WE COULD GET ANYBODY TO RIDE HIM!

HE'S GOT PLENTY OF SPEED, COLDNEL! CLOCK HIM WHILE I BREEZE HIM AROUND THE TRAINING TRACK!





THREE WEEKS LATER, TRAINER DAVIDSON TALKED THE COLONEL INTO ENTERING SPOOK IN A CHEAP CLAIMING RACE AND LETTING SAMMY RIDE. AT THE FINISH OF THE RACE...

WOW! DID THAT SPOOK BURN UP THE TRACK/ WON ALL BY HIMSELF AND BROKE THE TRACK RECORD!

AND WITH AN APPRENTICE KID MAKING HIS FIRST APPEARANCE!



FLUSHED WITH TRIUMPH AFTER THE RACE, SAMMY RAND JOINED THE COLONEL AND TRAINER DAVIDSON, ONLY TO LEARN...

WE'VE GOT BAD NEWS FOR YOU, SON! WE - WE LOST SPOOK! SOMEBODY CLAIMED HIM! HE HAS A NEW OWNER!



YOUNG SAMMY RAND WAS SHOCKED. NOBODY COULD TALK TO HIM OR SNAP HIM OUT OF HIS GLOOM. SPOOK'S NEW OWNER SHIPPED HIM TO ANOTHER TRACK. IN A FEW DAYS, SAMMY LEFT THE COLONEL'S FARM AND BEGAN TO DRIFT ABOUT THE COUNTRY, AIMLESSLY, WITHOUT AMBITION...



THEN ONE DAY, SEVERAL MONTHS LATER, SAMMY RAND LEARNED THAT SPOOK HAD BEEN ENTERED IN A RACE AT A SMALL, HALF MILE TRACK...

LOOK AT THAT KID PULL-UP WITH THE FAVORITE - SPOOK! THEY MUST HAVE IT FIXED NOT TO LET HIM WIN!

THEY WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT! SPOOK! SPOOK! YOU'VE GOT TO HEAR ME!



ARE YOU NUTS, KID? EVEN IF THAT GLUEBAG COULD HEAR YOU, HE WOULDN'T UNDERSTAND!

DON'T LET HIM HOLD YOU BACK, SPOOK! SHAKE THE REINS LOOSE! BREAK FREE!

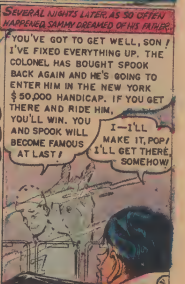
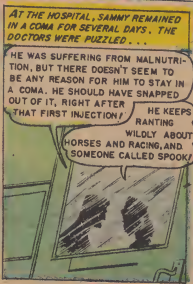
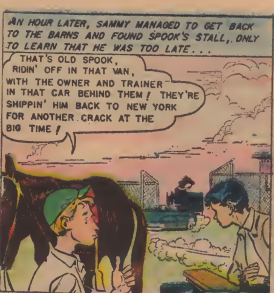
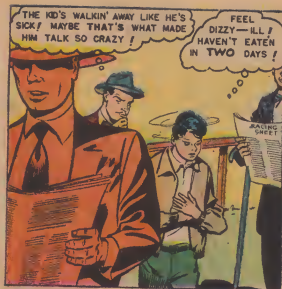


AT THAT MOMENT, AS THOUGH RESPONDING TO UNSEEN POWERS, THE COIT VIOLENTLY SHOOK THE REINS OUT OF THE RIDER'S HANDS. THE JOCKEY WAS FORCED TO CLING TO HIS MOUNT'S NECK FOR DEAR LIFE, NO LONGER ABLE TO CONTROL HIM!

THAT CRAZY BEETLE ACTED JUST AS THOUGH HE HEARD YOUR INSTRUCTIONS, SHOOK LOOSE AND WON THE HEAT!

HE DID HEAR ME! SPOOK ISN'T LIKE ANY OTHER HORSE. HE AND I UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER!





THE NEXT MORNING, SAMMY REGAINED CONSCIOUSNESS. A TELEGRAM ARRIVED FOR HIM...



YOU'RE STILL PRETTY WEAK, BOY! I'D ADVISE YOU TO STAY HERE IN BED FOR ANOTHER FEW DAYS TO REGAIN YOUR STRENGTH!

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE, DOC! I'LL JUST BARELY BE ABLE TO MAKE IT IF I LEAVE FOR NEW YORK NOW!



ON THE DAY OF THE BIG RACE, SAMMY ARRIVED AT THE TRACK ABOUT 20 MINUTES BEFORE POST TIME...

GLAD YOU GOT HERE ON TIME, KID! I STILL DON'T KNOW WHY I PAID ANY ATTENTION TO THAT LETTER YOU WROTE, THOUGH!

LETTER? WHAT LETTER, MR. DAVIDSON? I DIDN'T WRITE YOU!



WHY, I'VE GOT IT RIGHT HERE. THE LETTER YOU WROTE ME, BEGGING ME TO RECLAIM SPOOK AND ENTER HIM IN THE HANDICAP, THAT YOU WOULD COME ON, TO RIDE HIM FOR ME! THAT'S STRANGE! THE LETTER'S DISAPPEARED!



I DIDN'T WRITE YOU, MR. DAVIDSON. ONLY REASON I CAME HERE, WAS BECAUSE OF YOUR TELEGRAM!

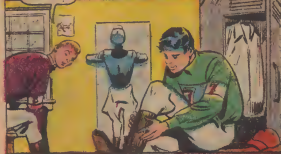
WHAT! I DIDN'T SEND YOU ANY TELEGRAM! I DIDN'T HAVE THE SLIGHTEST IDEA WHERE YOU WERE, SAMMY!



IT WAS ALMOST TIME FOR THE SIGNAL, "RIDERS UP!" THERE WASN'T TIME FOR SAMMY AND DAVIDSON TO FURTHER DISCUSS THE ODD MYSTERY OF THE TELEGRAM AND LETTER THAT WERE "RECEIVED" BUT NOT "SENT" IN THE JOCKEYS' QUARTERS...

SPOOK HASN'T RUN BETTER THAN TENTH IN MONTHS. HE DOESN'T STAND A CHANCE AGAINST THESE CLASS HORSES!

HE HASN'T HAD ME UP ON HIM! YOU WATCH OUR DUST, TODAY!



AT POST TIME, THE STARTING BELL CLANGED AND THE HORSES BURST IN A PACK FROM THE SPRUNG GATES...

THEY'RE OFF! I KNOW YOU DON'T HAVE A CHANCE, SAMMY AND SPOOK, BUT DO YOUR BEST!



THEY'VE DROPPED BACK TO DEAD LAST. THE COLT JUST DOESN'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES FOR THIS COMPANY. THE MORE I THINK ABOUT IT—SAMMY SAYING HE DIDN'T WRITE ME—THAT HE GOT A TELEGRAM I NEVER SENT—THIS WAS A CRAZY STUNT. OUGHT TO HAVE MY HEAD EXAMINED!



BUT SUDDENLY THE CROWD WAS ELECTRIFIED, AS THEY SAW SAMMY AND SPOOK, ON THE STRETCH TURN, MAKE THEIR MOVE AND PASS ONE TIRING HORSE AFTER ANOTHER!

GO, SPOOK, GO! YOU CAN DO IT! YOU'VE GOT TO, FOR BOTH OF US!



HE MADE IT! HE WON IN A PHOTO FINISH! WHAT A RIDE! WHAT A HORSE!



EVEN THOUGH THE RESULT OF THE RACE WAS OBVIOUS TO CLOSE OBSERVERS, A PHOTO WAS MADE OF THE CLOSE FINISH. AS THE MESSENGER BROUGHT THE PICTURES TO THE JUDGES...

SPOOK WON IT ALL RIGHT! BUT WAIT UNTIL YOU SEE THESE PICTURES!



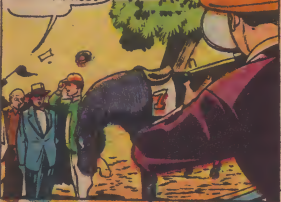
CONSTERNATION REIGNED IN THE JUDGES' BOOTH AS THEY STARED AT THE PHOTO OF THE FINISH. IT SHOWED SPOOK WITH AN EMPTY SADDLE, RIDERLESS!

THIS IS RIDICULOUS! WE ALL SAW THE BOY RIDING THE HORSE, SAW HIM BRING HIM BACK TO THE WINNER'S CIRCLE! MUST BE SOME CRAZY TRICK OF THE CAMERA!



TRAINER DAVIDSON, JUBILANT BEYOND EXPECTATIONS, DASHED TO THE PADDOCK WHERE THE HORSE AND RIDER WERE RECEIVING THE CROWD'S OVATIONS...

A MIRACLE! WITHOUT SAMMY TO RIDE HIM, THE HORSE WOULDN'T HAVE HAD A CHANCE!



THE JOCKEY AND THE HORSE WERE CUT OFF FROM DAVIDSON'S VIEW, MOMENTARILY, AS HE HURRIED TOWARD THEM. THEN, WHEN HE BROKE THROUGH...

HE---HE'S GONE! HE'S DISAPPEARED! ONLY SPOOK IS HERE NOW!



BUT SAMMY WAS HERE
A SECOND AGO! I SAW HIM.
I TELL YOU!

SORRY, MR. DAVIDSON,
I WISH I COULD HELP
YOU. BUT I HAVE NO
IDEA WHERE
SAMMY IS.



A MOMENT LATER, A TRACK MESSENGER BROUGHT
DAVIDSON A TELEGRAM. WITH TREMBLING FINGERS, HE
OPENED IT AND READ...

"SAMMY RAND, ILL IN THIS HOSPITAL WITH
PNEUMONIA, HAS ASKED US TO FORWARD YOU
HIS HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS ON THE VICTORY
OF YOUR HORSE... SIGNED--J.J. MATHEWS, SUPER-
INTENDENT OF MIDCITY HOSPITAL. 'I DON'T
UNDERSTAND WHAT THIS MEANS! IT--IT CAN'T
BE. THERE MUST BE SOME MISTAKE!'



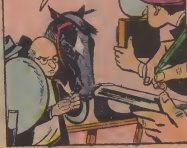
AS A FINAL CHECK, DAVIDSON WENT
TO THE JOCKEYS' ROOM AND ASKED
CAUTIOUS QUESTIONS...

WE DON'T KNOW WHERE SAMMY
WENT. HE DIDN'T COME BACK
HERE TO CHANGE AFTER THE RACE,
THOUGH I'M
SURE OF THAT!

THIS IS
SOMETHING
I DON'T
UNDERSTAND!



SO THAT'S WHAT MUST'VE
HAPPENED, SPOOK. SOMEHOW I
HAVE AN IDEA YOU KNOW MORE
ABOUT IT THAN I DO! BUT WE
DON'T DARE TELL THESE REPORT-
ERS THAT STORY, DO WE? WE--
WE'LL JUST TELL THEM THAT.
THAT'S ALL I CAN TELL
YOU NOW.



BUT HE MUST HAVE COME
OUT THROUGH THIS GATE!
IT'S THE ONLY EXIT FROM
THE PADDOCK!

HE COULDN'T HAVE
GOTTEN PAST WITHOUT
MY SEEIN' HIM, SIR!
SORRY! I KNOW THAT
FOR A FACT!



YES--YES, THAT'S HIS DESCRIPTION, ALL
RIGHT! AND--AND YOU SAY THAT HE ACTUALLY
IS A PATIENT---IN YOUR HOSPITAL? I--I
SEE! THANK YOU!



SOMEHOW DAVIDSON GOT THROUGH
THE INTERVIEW. HE LET SPOOK OUT
TO PASTURE WHILE HE HURRIED
TO THE HOSPITAL, TO SEE WHAT
HE COULD DO FOR SAMMY. HE
HAD AN IDEA THE HORSE UNDER-
STOOD MORE THAN HE WOULD
EVER KNOW BECAUSE BEFORE
HE LEFT TO TAKE THE TRAIN,
SPOOK PRICKED UP HIS EARS AND
WHINNIED SOFTLY, AS THOUGH
SOME GENTLE VOICE, INAUDIBLE
TO DAVIDSON, WAS SPEAKING TO
HIM...



THE END